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Jaargang 21 No. 105

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(advertisement)

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Conversation
20/01, 7pm

DECOR, EXHIBITIONS AND THE ROLE OF ART

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN DOROTHEA VON HANTELMANN, JAN MOT AND ASAD RAZA

Fondation Boghossian
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt laan 67
1050 Brussels

Ian Wilson

(advertisement)

186

Performance
21/01, 5-7pm
22/01, 3-5pm

GALERIE GROUP SHOW

Jan Mot
Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10
1000 Brussels, Belgium

(advertisement)

187

Performance
27/01, 7pm
28/01, 5pm
(reservation required)

ESZTER SALAMON

ESZTER SALAMON 1949

Jan Mot
Petit Sablon / Kleine Zavel 10
1000 Brussels, Belgium

(advertisement)

188

Art Fair
22/02 – 26/02

JAN MOT AT ARCO MADRID

Booth 7A04
Pavillon 7
IFEMA Feria de Madrid

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From the library of Dorothea von Hantelmann

BRUSSELS, JAN. 7 – The latest contribution to our series *From the Library of...* is dedicated to the Berlin based art historian and writer Dorothea von Hantelmann (see also her essay on pages 3–5). From now on the list will be distributed via our newspaper and our website. The series started in 2014 with a list of books from the library from Seth Siegelau, selected by Marja Bloem, followed by contributions from Yves Gevaert and Douglas Crimp. All these lists will soon be online on the gallery's website. The books selected by Dorothea von Hantelmann from her library are:

1. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, London: Routledge, 1995.
2. Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories. History, Technology, Art*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
3. Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley/

- Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1994.
4. Gerhard Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft. Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*, Frankfurt/New York: Campus, 1997.
5. Joyce Appleby, *The Relentless Revolution: A History of Capitalism*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co, 2010.
6. Helen Rees Leahy, *Museum Bodies*, London: Ashgate, 2012.
7. Lorraine Daston, Katharine Park, *Wunder und die Ordnung der Natur*, Berlin: Eichborn, 1998.
8. Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.
9. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage Publications, 1992.
10. Orhan Pamuk, *The Museum of Innocence*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

11. Carlos Castaneda, *The Active Side of Infinity*. New York: Harper Collins, 1998.
12. Osho, *Intimacy: Trusting Oneself and the Other*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001.
13. Peter Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012.
14. Alberto Villoldo, *Shaman, Healer, Sage: How to Heal Yourself and Others with the Energy Medicine of the Americas*. New York: Harmony Books, 2000.
15. Joachim Illies, *Das Geheimnis des Lebendigen. Leben und Werk des Biologen Adolf Portmann*, Munich: Kindler, 1976.
16. Eckhart Tolle, *The Power of Now*, Vancouver: Namaste Publishing 2004.
17. Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. San Francisco, California: Harper San Francisco, 1992.
18. Bruno Latour, *Rejoicing: or the torments of religious speech*. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2013.
19. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, New York: Random House, 1943.
20. Dorothea von Hantelmann, *How to do things with art: the meaning of art's performativity*, Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2010.



BRUSSELS, JAN. 6 – *another name, spoken* is a series of performances curated by Tom Engels which takes place at the gallery's new venue. The series starts with *Group Show* by Galerie (with works by Valentina Desideri, Adriana Lara, Alex Bailey, Dora Garcia, Jan Ritsema, Jonathan Burrows, Krööt Juurak, Angela Goh, Jennifer Lacey, Audrey Cottin, Mårten Spångberg and Pontus Pettersson) (21/01-22/01), followed by *Eszter Salamon 1949* by Eszter Salamon (27/01-28/01, reservation required). Image: Galerie.

Works that will be presented in this series

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Notes on the Exhibition

By Dorothea von Hantelmann

Give me a museum and I will change society.

— Tony Bennett

How is it, given the huge popularity enjoyed by museums and exhibitions in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, that the Artistic Director of dOCUMENTA (13) (of all people) can speak of the “obsolescence of the exhibition”?¹ Recent decades have seen an unprecedented increase in the building of museums and the founding of biennials—institutions that enjoy high visitor counts and attract no less attention in the media and in art discourse. How can this success be explained? And are there, nonetheless, grounds for viewing it as a sign of the exhibition’s growing obsolescence?

Historically speaking, the success story of the exhibition is no new phenomenon, rather it reflects an ongoing development that began more than two hundred years ago. Museums and exhibitions, with their focus on the material object, emerged parallel to our modern industrialized civil societies. Of course, objects played a role in aristocratic and courtly cultures—as symbols of taste, status, and wealth. But they were integral to an aesthetic of style and manners and functioned as the accessories of a subject intent on aesthetic refinement. In civil society, in contrast, the object takes center stage. It steps into a direct relation to the subject for whom it was formerly but an ornamental extra. Museums and exhibitions, loci basically for the viewing of objects, are instrumental in this process. This was and still is the case for world expositions, the Louvre, and documenta. They are sites of meaning production, aesthetic experience, and (self-)reflection—processes that are bound up with the material object vis-à-vis a viewing subject. Hence, to inquire into the success of museums and exhibitions automatically entails inquiring into the status of things. How is it that things in modern civil societies are so meaningful that modern temples and rituals are dedicated to them?

In sharp contrast to feudal and aristocratic societies, civil society, as is known, is an integrative society where material production and culture are no longer mutually exclusive. The post-revolutionary bourgeoisie views itself as a class that

labors, produces, and also claims a right to aesthetically refine itself. In the context of this historical process of transformation, the object effects two basic things that courtly-aristocratic cultures were unable (and unwilling) to do. First, the object—and this is true in a particular sense for the material work of art—unites the spheres of material production and of the aesthetic, which henceforth are brought together in one practice. For the work of art as a material artifact relates to the field of production, which becomes the dominant source of wealth and prosperity and is in a position to make the secular object the productive source of cultural meaning and reflection. And second, quite apart from this feat of synthesis, the object now makes culture accessible to a larger part of the population. If the courtly-aristocratic practices of conversation and sociability were time-intensive and thus reserved to those who did not have to work,² the aesthetic relation to “refined goods” (Sombart) opens up time-extensive possibilities reconcilable with working activities to purchase aesthetic refinement or to attach it to oneself, as it were, via the object.

Thus, if for early civil society the material object functions as a kind of medium for democratizing culture under time-restricted conditions, it is museums and exhibitions that constitute the central ritual that rehearses, cultivates, and reflects this connection between the individual and the material object, and, as a corollary, that effects what no private interior or department store could (or can) do: it cultivates the material object’s hegemony regarding the production of subjectivity, and it simultaneously equips precisely this nexus with something like state-sanctioned authority. If every society has its rituals, the exhibition—and this is the root of its success—*is* the ritual of “productivist society” (Guattari), a society that defines itself in terms of objects and that derives its identity and wealth from the production of material goods.

If the exhibition is bound up a priori with the fundamental parameters of a modern socio-economic order, how can it become obsolete? First of all, let it be said, talk of the exhibition’s obsolescence is also not new. Every museum boom to date has been accompanied by a wave of criticism of the institution. When, between 1900 and 1920, 210 museums were

built in Germany, almost as many as in the entire nineteenth century, Ludwig Pallat, a public official in the Prussian Ministry of Education, wrote: “Unfortunately, it is true that the majority of museums with their quantity of material as well as its layout and presentation quickly tire the visitor.” “The broad public,” Pallat went on to say, was “remarkably cool towards” museums.³ Recent surveys have shown that—the immense popularity of museums notwithstanding—visitors spend an average of just a few seconds before a work.⁴ There seems to be a paradox: the more successful exhibitions become and the closer they approach their historic goal of democratizing culture, the less the individual work can open up the experience of art to the newly won public.

This paradox lies partly in the format itself. Precisely because the exhibition is a priori bound up with the production paradigm of modern market societies, to survive as a modern ritual it must constantly change and readjust its relation to the object in line with current socio-economic conditions. However, this work of adjustment proceeds slowly and is only partially successful. Certain conventions cannot be superseded because they are integral to the idea of an exhibition—for example, flexibility, an intrinsic strength, but increasingly also a weakness, of the format. The *forma exhibendi* is a stable, institutionalizing, and yet perpetually changing structure. A painting, if it is part of an altar, belongs to a supposedly unchanging sacred order. The same picture in a museum can enter a range of contexts. The exhibited (i.e., ex-hibited) work of art is preceded by an act of separation that is constitutive of this dispositif, an act of extracting the work from its original context. Whether this is the museum’s basic problem⁵ or its decisive cultural achievement,⁶ it is at all events this flexible structure that makes the exhibition a *modern* ritual. Historically, the museum is the first public ritual to address the individual qua individual—not only because the experience of the artwork is designed to be isolated (and isolating) (in contrast to the theater, say, where the individual addressed is part of a collective) but also because the exhibition, unlike a movie or concert, makes flexibilized and hence individualizable forms of perception possible. Museums and exhibitions in the modern age are a kind of ritual of aesthetic refinement for

the masses, a ritual, that is, that addresses a mass of people not as a mass but as a group of individuals. This may be one of the format's essential achievements; yet its flexibility also increasingly proves problematic. For the more comprehensive exhibitions become and the more heterogeneous their public, the clearer it is that a format geared to the flexibilization of ties is not itself able to create any (or sufficient) ties. How can a viewer immerse himself in a work when, as for instance at New York's Metropolitan Museum, there are more than a million other objects? Can a blockbuster-exhibition visitor with a time-limited admission ticket, and accompanied by hundreds or thousands of other visitors, enter the potentially endless interplay of perception and projection that, according to Lessing, allows the work of art "not merely to be given a glance but to be contemplated... repeatedly and at length"?⁷ What happens to culture like this when it opens itself to the masses? To what extent are such practices compatible with what Richard Sennett calls the "democratic pressure of crowds"?⁸ Of course, the individual viewer *can* devote his undivided attention to the individual work, but the format itself does not automatically or necessarily create this form of perception, and under present-day conditions even discourages it.

The crucial question concerning contemporary exhibitions would seem to be how a culture geared to the flexibilizing of ties can create ties or connective elements. Time is a vital factor here. Classical works of visual art tend to compress time in the object rather than manifesting it. But how can time be decompressed again in the exhibition? In late Renaissance and Baroque curiosity cabinets, it was often the prince himself who presented the objects to visitors. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century painting galleries were social conversation spaces. Louis Marin writes of the "discourse 'apropos' the works and 'about' art" as a "necessary completion" of the self-sufficient work of art.⁹ The perception of art required the spoken word in order to become a social event. Such conversation enriched the works not only with language but also with time. They linked the isolated work with temporal duration, repeated perception, and thought. Goethe spent hours, weeks, months before works of art, perceiving and writing. Nineteenth-century travelers sojourned for lengthy periods in a place, learning the language, meeting artists, and copying works in museums to better understand them. Even in the mid-twentieth century, Alfred H. Barr Jr. conceived

of the Museum of Modern Art's public as a "public consisting of connoisseurs" equipped with the leisure (and, one would like to add, with the—internalized—skill) to repeatedly linger in the aura of the modern artwork. When today artists such as Philippe Parreno, Pierre Huyghe, and Anri Sala design exhibitions as dramatically shaped experiences,¹⁰ they do so, in the words of Parreno (drawing on an idea of Daniel Buren), "to inscribe the object in space *and* time,"¹¹ to give back to the autonomous object something of the embeddedness it has generally lost in being exhibited; to anchor it, not only in a context but in a ritual, in a temporally, socially, and intersubjectively situated event.

Since the 1960s, there have been repeated artistic attempts at reconfiguring the exhibition ritual and transforming the exhibition as a locus traditionally devoted to our most elaborate relationship to the object into a locus where what is at issue are intersubjective processes and the creation of connections and experiential elements. How can one explain this loss of power of the object in the second half of the twentieth century? From a sociological, economic, historical point of view, the answer to this question is plain and far-reaching: the status of the object is changing because the premises of the socioeconomic order, by dint of which the object became central to the production of meaning, have altered. This process was at work throughout the entire twentieth century but had already begun at the end of the nineteenth century, when, with mass production and advanced industrialization, the relationship to things changed. The sheer quantity of things and their cultivated hegemonic position (which finds its fullest expression in the exhibited work of art) are increasingly experienced as overwhelming. In the words of Georg Simmel: "Just as, on the one hand, we have become slaves of the production process, so, on the other, we have become the slaves of products."¹² Things and people, according to Simmel, have become separated; objective culture preponderates over subjective culture. "Objects must enter into the Ego, but the Ego must also enter into objects."¹³ When, therefore, at the end of the nineteenth century "the broad public" is "remarkably cool" toward museums, this is because the encyclopedic museum can no longer keep up with the increasing complexity of our relationship to objects. For a society entering into an increasingly individualized relation to things, the model of historical instruction is no longer enough.

The white cube represents an adjust-

ment to these new economic and cultural premises and to the growing need to vest objects with more subjectivity. The bourgeois museum's wealth of objects yields to the autonomous work, whose isolation on the wall corresponds to people's increasing individualization. The white space becomes a (purportedly) neutral, universal background for an isolated object that can be presented, unembedded, in ever new contexts, just as the modern individual exists in multiple relations. If the nineteenth-century bourgeois museum helped pave the way for the early market society, cultivating and reflecting the primacy of objects in line with the production paradigm of industrializing societies, the white cube is the ritual of the realized and established market society, where, with the emergence of supply markets, the focus starts to shift from the object produced to the consuming subject. Because it is in line with these developments, the white cube became the dominant exhibition format of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. But can the white cube remain the prime ritual for an advanced, present-day consumer society? The consumer society is also productivist. For it, too, growth in production is unquestioned. But the primacy of production in the consumer society no longer relates to the satisfaction of needs, but rather, as J. K. Galbraith had already put it at the end of the 1950s, to the execution of stabilizing social services that are distinct from needs and their satisfaction.¹⁴ At the moment in history when, as J. M. Keynes put it, a shift from *needs* to *wants* occurs, so that the satisfaction of wants becomes more central to economic activity than the satisfaction of needs,¹⁵ the status of produced objects changes. Given a certain saturation, and a widespread satisfaction of material needs, immaterial and subject-related aspirations come to the fore. As the American sociologist David Riesman noted already in 1950, consumers relate increasingly less to things themselves than to their contents as experience and event.¹⁶

Only up to a certain point can the white cube respond to this shift. At bottom, every artistic attempt undertaken to date at permanently transferring the object into the sphere of processes and events (from the avant-gardes of the 1950s and 1960s to the relational aesthetics of the 1990s) has failed, as a result of what Svetlana Alpers calls the museum effect¹⁷—the tendency, namely, of this format to make every material object the focus of meaning production. It remains to be seen, then, whether a ritual arising in

the nineteenth century that foregrounded the exhibited object—a produced object in which the time of the production process has solidified—can, in the twenty-first century, also present processes and experiences and thus respond in the long term to the socioeconomic shift of focus from object to subject. The exhibition as object-show might then really be obsolete and, once the object has fulfilled its function in the framework of a democratizing cultural movement, yield to an (albeit less elitist) aesthetic geared more strongly to the subject. The exhibition per se is not therefore obsolete. As an individualized and ritualized experiential space it could remain the ritual that has the strongest ties to contemporary society, in the line of tradition of the format and also equipped with its legitimating power.

- 1 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev in conversation with the author in New York, February 2010.
- 2 And who also stood under the necessity, as Veblen and others have pointed out, of flaunting their surplus time. See Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Mentor Books, 1953).
- 3 Quoted from James J. Sheehan, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunstmuseen: Von der fürstlichen Kustkammer zur modernen Sammlung* (Munich: Beck, 2002), p. 208.
- 4 See Jeffrey K. Smith and Lisa F. Smith, “Spending Time on Art,” *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 19, no. 2 (2001), pp. 229–36.
- 5 For the French writer, archaeologist, and art theorist Antoine Chrysostome Quatremère, who published his thoughts on the museum in 1806, the separation of works from their proper contexts entailed the loss of their cultural lifeblood. Shorn of their political, religious, and intellectual function, they become neutralized in the museum to “mere things” without meaning or experiential content. See Quatremère de Quincy, *Considérations morales sur la destination des ouvrages de l’art* (Paris: Fayart, 1989).
- 6 For Hegel, whose *Phenomenology of Spirit* appeared a year after Quatremère’s reflections in 1807, this negation of immanence that the museum brings to expression was its decisive cultural achievement, namely, to present the work for what, in Hegel’s eyes, it quintessentially is: a product of spirit. This alone reflects the modern citizen, who is theoretically defined by this intellectual

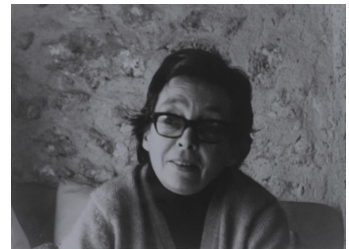
- (no longer natural) relation to the world. See *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, vol. 3 (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), §753, pp. 547–48, and *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, *Werke*, vol. 7; English translations: *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 585; *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
- 7 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 19.
 - 8 Richard Sennett, “The Solitude of Art,” in *Common Wealth*, ed. Jessica Morgan, exh. cat. (London: Tate Publishing, 2003), p. 96.
 - 9 Louis Marin, *Über das Kunstgespräch* (Berlin: diaphanes, 2001), p. 17.
 - 10 I am thinking, for example, of Pierre Huyghe’s exhibition at New York’s Dia Center for the Arts (2003) and of Philippe Parreno’s and Anri Sala’s exhibitions at the Serpentine Gallery, London (2010/2011 and 2011).
 - 11 Philippe Parreno in conversation with Cyril Béghin, *Cahiers du Cinéma* (July–August 2010), p. 74 (author’s italics).
 - 12 Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Charles Lemert (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), p. 525.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 349. [I have slightly modified this and the preceding quotation. *Trans.*]
 - 14 John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1958).
 - 15 John Maynard Keynes, “Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren,” in *Essays in Persuasion* (New York: Norton, 1963), pp. 358–73.
 - 16 David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950).
 - 17 Svetlana Alpers, “The Museum as a Way of Seeing,” in *Exhibiting Cultures*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), p. 26.

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Dorothea von Hantelmann is an art historian and writer; based in Berlin. Together with Tino Sehgal and Asad Raza she is the co-curator of the exhibition Decor at Fon-

dation Boghossian, Villa Empain. She was documenta Professor at the Art Academy/University of Kassel and has published widely on contemporary art and exhibition culture. She is the author of How to Do Things with Art (2010) a book on performativity within contemporary art, co-edited Die Ausstellung. Politik eines Rituals (2010) and currently prepares a book project that explores art exhibitions as ritual spaces in which fundamental values and categories of modern, liberal and market based societies historically have been, and continue to be practiced and reflected.

David Lamelas at Arco Madrid



BRUSSELS, JAN. 4 – Jan Mot and Sprüth-Magers will jointly present work by David Lamelas at ARCO, the art fair in Madrid, which takes place from February 22 till 26. The presentation is part of *Dialogues*, a special section of the fair, and will include two film works by Lamelas dealing with the French writer Marguerite Duras.

A Report from Miami

By Jacob King

NEW YORK CITY, JAN. 4—In my last letter I wrote about an exhibition on Virginia Dwan Gallery, whose international program evolved in tandem with jet aviation. In this letter I had imagined I would report from one of the centers of today's global gallery network: the Miami Beach Convention Center on the first week of December. But after three hungover days fumbling through the question "what did you see that was interesting?" and vague observations like "the quality seemed better this year," I have to admit that I have little interest in reflecting on Art Basel Miami Beach. Is it worth the attention? If going to Miami used to be glamorous or exciting, it is now something that most people will only admit to doing begrudgingly, and often with feigned embarrassment.

Looking for something more interesting on which to report, and resisting an urge to simply lie on the beach, I took a taxi before my flight home to the Perez Art Museum to see the Julio Le Parc show. I'd never been to the Perez Museum—formerly the Miami Art Museum, until it was renamed for a local real estate developer—and the building is quite impressive. Designed by Herzog & De Meuron and opened in 2013, it combines their signature mix of poured cement and exposed fluorescent bulbs (as you would find, for instance, in the Schaulager) with a kind of tropicalism: a wooden lattice canopy that extends in all directions around the museum's galleries, forming wide verandas which are punctuated by tremendous hanging columns of tropical plants.

The Le Parc show took up the museum's entire third floor—by far its largest temporary exhibition space—and surveyed five decades of the artist's work, beginning with the paintings and works on paper he produced after moving to Paris from Buenos Aires in 1958. These *Séquences progressives ambivalentes* consist of circles, squares and triangles, repeated in rows and grids with slight variations so as to trick the eye in unexpected ways. The black-and-white works appear to vibrate, the elements alternately receding and coming forwards in space, while the colored shapes produce "after-images" as you look, making for a kind of constant oscillation, in which you are unsure as to whether the color you perceive is actually there on the surface, or is itself the "after-

image" of an adjacent color (often a brightly contrasting hue.) The effect of multiple rooms of these works is disorienting if you try to look at each one; here you can see Le Parc figuring out which combinations of color, shapes, and patterns produce visual instability—a sensation of movement.

Most of the works in the show actually moved, beginning with *Continuous-Mobile*, an expansive curtain of small square mirrors hanging on threads which filled the opening wall of the show. Originally exhibited at the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, in the third Paris Biennale of 1963, its mirrors vibrate constantly with the ambient air current, shimmering and reflecting images and light. Other works incorporate simple motors, contorting stainless steel ribbons or bouncing mirrored disks up-and-down on springs, or incandescent lightbulbs, which flicker on-and-off amidst colored gels and plastic lenses and spinning fans, producing all manner of optical effects. One room was filled with suspended funhouse mirrors slowly turning, which compress and distend your image as you pass through (as you can imagine, it breeds innumerable selfies), but my favorite of the large installations was a dark room with a perforated box at its center which had a light inside—*Cell with Vibrating Projection*. This piece was also shown in 1963 at the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, and its effect is still a bit wild: the box vibrates rapidly, sending horizontal bands of light pulsing up and down the walls, which makes it seem as if the room is moving (as in an earthquake) while your body and the floor remain stable.

Walking through the museum after spending two days in the convention center was a pleasure; I suppose I forget how stressed and haphazard are the ways I look at art in a fair until the ordeal runs right up against the generous experience of a museum, especially a small-scale museum like this. And yet I have to admit that, beyond my initial amusement, and some interest in figuring out how the kinetic objects operated, I struggled to engage with most of Le Parc's works. I kept trying to imagine how radical the objects from the 1960s must have seemed at the time they were produced—picturing, for instance, the wall of mirrors and vibrating lights at the 1963 Paris Biennale, amidst what I presume were rooms of muddy postwar French painting. Many of the later works on view implicate the viewer even further in the kinetic apparatus, but

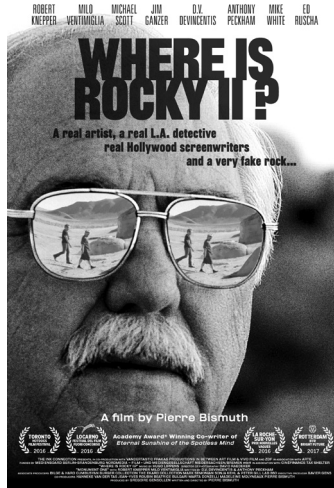
they fail to produce any of the confusion which animates the best early works; these "interactive" pieces include fun-house glasses which visitors are invited to wear (each of which distorts vision in a particular way), as well as different arcade-like contraptions, in which pressing a button activates a motor that manipulate objects on the wall (mirrors, discs, a reflective band, etc.)

One of the few things I knew about Le Parc before seeing this show concerned his involvement with the Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel (GRAV), which he formed in 1960 with a group of young artists that included François Morellet. GRAV was at the forefront of the Paris avant-garde for many years, with a program of exhibitions and works that set out to dismantle conventional relationships between artworks and viewers, like the labyrinth of rooms constructed at the Paris Biennale, or the Situationist-infused "Day in the Streets" in 1966, which invited the public to participate in "artworks" scattered throughout the city. They also published copious manifestos (which, I discovered in writing this, you can find on Le Parc's website); these often boil down to a call to activate the "passive" viewer ("*It is forbidden not to participate!*") and reach their apogee in 1968 with a text decrying the artists of the *Nouvelle Tendance* as "luxury goods craftsmen," calling for a "cultural guerrilla warfare against the current state of things," and announcing an intention to "choose a work that is characteristic of each avant-garde trend (Pop Art, New Figuration, New Realism, Op Art)" to be "publicly burned on the Place de l'Opéra." Is it possible, I wondered, that works that once must have disturbed the status quo—artworks that moved, that projected light, that invited you to touch them—have now become anodyne?

At the Miami airport, waiting for my plane home, I picked up a copy of the weekend *Financial Times*, which happened to include a long review of Le Parc's exhibition. Grazing over its praise of the "colourful, noisy, irrelevant and surprising" show, I stopped when I got to the author's mention of a body Le Parc's "more overtly critical works" which, he lamented, were not included in the exhibition. I had no idea that these existed, works like *Knock Down the Myths* from 1969, which comprises "a booth with balls to be thrown at riot police and establishment figures like a shooting gallery;" or *Inquiry Game: Strike the Officers* from 1971, an installation in which visitors not only have the option to hit punching bags printed with images of priests, police officers, soldiers, and public officials, but actually have to physically

push them aside to proceed through the gallery. (The latter was included in Le Parc's 2015 retrospective at the Serpentine in London, which produced an edition out of another related work, a dartboard with an image of Uncle Sam at its bullseye next to the word "imperialista.") It is not hard to imagine, given the explosiveness of relations between the public and police right now in the U.S. — the harassment and killings of brown and black people at the hands of police officers, the "Black Lives Matter" movement, and the reactionary "Blue Lives Matter" platform on which Donald Trump was elected — why these works which asked viewers to hit police officers were excluded from a show at a municipal museum. (The incident that triggered the Black Lives Matter movement — the killing of Trayvon Martin — happened in Florida just a few hours north of Miami.) But considering that the show bills itself as Le Parc's first major retrospective in the United States, the absence of these works is sad; it limits the scope of the injunction to "participate," and calls into question how the museum conceives of its audience — who they are and what their concerns might be.

I didn't expect to be concluding my reflections on the Julio Le Parc show with any mention of current politics, but this elision makes thinking about the broader context of the exhibition unavoidable. Along these lines, if I were to wrap up my report by returning (reluctantly) to the subject with which I began, I would want to say that in the wake of Brexit, the U.S. election, and resurgent nationalism across the world, it strikes me that Art Basel Miami Beach exemplifies exactly the kind of borderless, cosmopolitan globalism that is under assault today. ("We" see the same people in Miami, New York, Berlin, London, Basel, Los Angeles...) If anything undergirds the global art market, it is this free flow of goods and people across national borders. But at the same time, there are few things that so deeply embody the problems of this system, which are at the root of the violent reactions against it: namely, a massively unequal distribution of resources, where the gains of the past few decades of globalization have gone mostly to a small elite, who as a result have a huge amount of excess money to spend on real estate, luxury goods, and art. Because of its privileged position at the intersection of these forces, I would hope that, at its best, contemporary art might be able to reflect with a special shrewdness on these relationships (as opposed to just dressing them up, or making things more entertaining.) If so, then museums, curators, galleries and artists have to meet this challenge.



The US premiere of *Where is Rocky II?* by Pierre Bismuth took place at the Bing Theater, LACMA in Los Angeles on January 13.

Works that will be presented in this area:

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In Brief

Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein acquired the installation *A List of Names of Artists I Like (Or Cubism Seen Under a Specific Light)*, n.d. by **Mario Garcia Torres**.

Ian Wilson's work consisting of the inclusion of his name in the catalogue, invitation cards, artists' list etc. of a group exhibition entered the collection of 49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine in Metz (FR). The first time this work was realised was for the show organised by Seth Siegelau, entitled *One Month*, in 1969.

Agenda

Francis Alÿs

The Fabiola Project, Menil Collection, Houston (US), 21/05-28/01 (solo); *MACBA Collection 31*, MACBA, Barcelona (ES), 17/06-18/06; *Gestures and Archives of the Present, Genealogies of the Future*, Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan, Taiwan, 10/09 - 05/02; *Le temps du sommeil*, Secession, Vienna, 18/11 - 22/01 (solo); *Poetica politica*, De 11 Lijnen, Oudenburg (BE), 27/11 - 26/02; *Una historia de negociación*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (CA), 01/12 - 09/04 (solo); *Age - Piece*, 1983 - 2016, Jan Mot, Brussels, 17/03 - 22/04 (solo); *My City, My Studio / My City, My Life*, Kathmandu Triennale, Kathmandu, 24/03 - 09/04; *The Absent Museum*, WIELS, Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, 20/04 - 13/08; *Archaic*, National Pavilion of Iraq, 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (IT), 13/05 - 26/11; *Action!*, Kunsthaus Zürich, Zurich (CH), 23/06 - 30/07

Sven Augustijnen

Cher(e)s Ami(e)s : Hommage aux donateurs des collections contemporaines, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 23/03-06/02; *Gestures and Archives of the Present, Genealogies of the Future*, Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan, 10/09-05/02; *House of Commons*, Portikus, Frankfurt/Main (DE), 02/12-29/01; *Médiathèque du FMAC - Fonds vidéo de la Ville de Genève*, Artgenève, Geneva (CH), 26/01-29/01; *STEP UP! Belgian Dance and Performance on Camera 1970-2000*, Argos,

Brussels, 28/01-19/03; *Post-Peace*, Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart (DE), 24/02 - 06/05; *How To Live Together*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 25/05 - 15/10

Pierre Bismuth

Images et Mots depuis Magritte, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris, 13/10-29/01; *The Multiplier*, Frans Masereel center, Kasterlee (BE), 18/11-30/04; *Cinéma mon amour. Film in Art*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aargau (CH), 22/01-17/04; *Where Is Rocky II?*, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Rotterdam (NL), 25/01 - 05/02 (screening); *Du verbe à la communication. La collection de Josée et Marc Gensollen*, Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes (FR), 03/02 - 18/06

Manon de Boer

Gestures and Archives of the Present, Genealogies of the Future, Taipei Biennial, Taipei Fine Arts Museum of Taiwan, Taiwan, 10/09 - 05/02; *Resonating Surfaces*, Mendes Wood, Sao Paulo (BR), 22/11 - 04/02; *Attica, USA 1971 Images and sounds of a rebellion*, Ryerson Image Centre, Toronto (CA), 18/01 - 09/04; *The world has never been more transparent*, Shanghai 21st Century Minsheng Museum, Shanghai (CN), 19/03 - 31/07

Rineke Dijkstra

Idiosyncrasy. Anchovies Dream of an Olive Mausoleum, Centro de Artes Visuales Fundación Helga de Alvear, Caceres (ES), 29/04 - 09/04; *Rineke Dijkstra*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, 10/12 - 16/07 (solo); Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, 27/01 - 04/03 (solo)

Mario García Torres

+52. *Recent landscapes*, Fundación Calosa, Guanajuato (MX), 29/10 - 15/03; *OLHO*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice (IT), 19/01 (screening); *Du verbe à la communication. La collection de Josée et Marc Gensollen*, Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes (FR), 03/02 - 18/06; *La fiesta fue ayer (y nadie recuerda nada)*, Archivo, Mexico City, 07/02 - 18/03; *WAGSTAFF*, Mostyn, Llandudno (GB), 17/02 - 25/03; Sharjah Biennial 13, Sharjah (AE), 10/03 - 12/06; *completely something else*, Point Centre for Contemporary Art, Nicosia (CY), 03/12 - 11/02

Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster

Where Text is Broken by a Building..., Arario Museum, Seoul, 30/08 - 26/02; *Decor*, Fondation Boghossian - Villa Empain, 08/09 - 29/01; *Pynchon Park*, MAAT, Lisbon, 05/10 - 06/02 (solo); *Costumes & Wishes for the 21st Century*,

Schinkel Pavilion, Berlin, 31/10 - 22/01 (solo); *Opera-House*, Sonneveld House, Rotterdam (NL), 13/11 - 05/07 (solo)

Douglas Gordon

Museum Revisited - 1996-2016, Migros Museum, Zurich (CH), 15/10 - 05/02; *Rebel, Rebel*, MAC's, Hornu (BE), 23/10 - 22/01; *Franz West. Artistclub*, 21er Haus, Vienna, 14/12 - 23/04; *Du verbe à la communication. La collection de Josée et Marc Gensollen*, Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes (FR), 03/02 - 18/06

Joachim Koester

In the Face of Overwhelming Forces, Camden Arts Centre, London, 28/01 - 26/03 (solo); *Maybe this act, this work, this thing*, STUK, Leuven (BE), 28/03 - tbc (solo)

David Lamelas

MACBA Collection 31, MACBA, Barcelona (ES), 17/06 - 18/06; *Rebel, Rebel*, MAC's, Hornu (BE), 23/10 - 22/01; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid, 24/02 - 25/02 (screening)

Sharon Lockhart

Witness, MCA, Chicago (US), 02/07 - 19/02; *Rudzienko*, Berlin International Film Festival, Berlin, 09/02 - 19/02 (screening); *Rudzienko*, Cinema Mon Amour, UC Berkeley, Berkeley (US), 15/03 - 17/03 (screening); *Polish Pavilion*, 57th Venice Biennale, Venice (IT), 13/05 - 26/11 (solo)

Tino Sehgal

Take Me (I'm Yours), The Jewish Museum, New York City (US), 16/09 - 05/02; *A Slow Succession with Many Interruptions*, SFMOMA, San Francisco (US), 10/12 - 02/04; *Action!*, Kunsthau Zürich, Zurich (CH), 23/06 - 30/07

Philippe Thomas

Récit d'un temps court 2, Mamco, Geneva (CH), 12/10 - 29/01; *[SIC]. Works from the CAPC Collection*, CAPC musée d'art contemporain, Bordeaux (FR), 13/10 - 27/10

Tris Vonna-Michell

You Don't Need a Weatherman, Galerie Thomas Schulte, Berlin, 10/12 - 28/01

Ian Wilson

KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 20/01 - 14/05 (solo); *Du verbe à la communication. La collection de Josée et Marc Gensollen*, Carré d'Art, Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes (FR), 03/02 - 18/06; *The Transported Man*, Eli and Edythe Broad Art

Museum, Michigan State University, East Lansing (US), 06/05 - 02/07



BRUSSELS, JAN. 7 - Camden Arts Centre in London organises a solo exhibition with **Joachim Koester** (28/01-26/03) which includes a new commissioned film entitled *Maybe this act, this work, this thing* conveying the advent of cinema through bodies of vaudeville performers. This new work will also be presented at STUK in Leuven (BE), opening on the 28th of March.

Colophon

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